



Steven Cook 368 Phaeton Street

Windsor CT 06095 February 17, 2022

HB 5037: AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 Connecticut State Department of Education's Budget

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Steve Cook and I am from Windsor CT. I am asking for your support in addressing minority teacher recruitment (MTR) for all districts, while supporting workforce development, by designating \$5.5 million as a line item in the State Department of Education section of the state budget to support the effort of any Connecticut district partnering with a Residency Program that is specifically committed to training teachers of color. One program that supports this effort is CT-TRP, which is an 18th-month alternative route to certification program that provides residents with a salary and benefits while attending courses. They also work side-by-side with a mentor teacher for the school year and are guaranteed a full-time teaching position upon completion of the program and certification requirements. Over three years, CT-TRP has already included 69 residents of color. With your support, this will increase by up to 120 new teachers of color in CT in the next two years. In addition, this hands-on training is a pathway to a lifelong career and economic stability for those who are underemployed or unemployed.

As the Director of Human resources at ACES, I partnered with Marlene Megos to discuss the merits of the residency program and how ACES can be a part of such a groundbreaking program. Upon learning how the program can expedite the process of placing highly skilled teachers of color in front of all students, I brought it to our ACES Executive Team and we overwhelmingly bought into the program. I have had the honor of meeting and having conversations with many of the Residents as they do much of their training, learning and preparation at ACES facilities.

We know it is a much needed program in a state with such a wide gap in staff of color compared to students of color. It appears to be cost prohibitive for many of our member districts, but it is an investment we cannot afford to make for our students. Your support for this funding would go a long way in breaking down barriers and exposing all students to varied and diverse learning opportunities.

While well intentioned, the mechanism enacted for MTR for Residency Programs within the 2022-23 biennial budget is inadequate to meet the needs of recruiting and retaining teachers of color across all CT public schools. I appreciate your consideration of this important request and look forward to the state financially supporting teacher residency.

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